



TESTIMONY OF
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Public Health Committee

March 20, 2013

**S.B. No. 1070 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL NURSE STAFFING AND
ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCHOOL NURSE ADVISORY COUNCIL.**

Good Day to the Co-Chairs and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Verna Bernard-Jones and I am a school nurse at West Middle School in Hartford. I'm also President of the Hartford Federation of Teachers Health Professionals, a local union representing 65 school nurses and health professionals employed in the Hartford school district. I am writing testimony in support of S.B 1070.

Let me begin by stating the definition of school nursing as defined by the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) in 1999.

The Definition of School Nursing:

"School nursing is a specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well-being, academic success, and life-long achievement of students. To that end, school nurses facilitate positive student responses to normal development; promote health and safety; intervene with actual and potential health problems; provide case management services; and actively collaborate with others to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self-management, self-advocacy, and learning." **NASN/1999**

In 2002 AFT Healthcare surveyed its nurses and adapted the following resolutions:

School nurses provide vital links between public and private resources and programs, collaboration between schools and health and human service agencies to bring school and community services to schools, and support efforts to connect families to insurance programs to meet the needs of children and families.

The country's school nurses are pivotal members of a coordinated school health system, delivering services to children and, thereby, eliminating health disparities and barriers and supporting academic success for all children.

As the school nurse in a school with a student body of close to 700 students I attend weekly Student Assessment Team meetings (SAT), Pupil Planning Team meetings, 504 meetings and Behavior intervention Planning meetings. In short, I must provide healthcare but be acutely knowledgeable of Educational laws that protect students' rights and access to education.

In 2010 The Institute on Medicine (IOM) and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) published a joint study on the **Future of Nursing**. Here are some of the findings and recommendations.

The Changing Health Care System

The IOM study states "In the 21st century, the health challenges facing the nation have shifted dramatically. The health care system is in the midst of great change as care providers discover new ways to provide patient-centered care; to deliver more primary care as opposed to specialty care; and to deliver more care in the community rather than the acute care setting. Nurses are well poised to meet these needs by virtue of their numbers, scientific knowledge, and adaptive capacity.....

The trend over the past 20 years has been a growing receptivity on the part of state legislatures to expanded scopes of practice for nurses. While no single actor or agency can independently make a sweeping change to eliminate current barriers, the various state and federal entities can each make relevant decisions that together can lead to needed improvements. "

Conclusion from this joint study states:

"Now is the time to eliminate the outdated regulations and organizational and cultural barriers that limit the ability of nurses to practice to the full extent of their education, training, and competence. The U.S. is transforming its health care system to provide quality care leading to improved health outcomes, and nurses can and should play a significant role.....Scope-of-practice regulations in all states should reflect the full extent not only of nurses but of each profession's education and training. Elimination of barriers for all professions with a focus on collaborative teamwork will maximize and improve care throughout the health care system. "

I present the findings of this study to highlight the need for a positive vote on the formation of the School Nurse Advisory Committee. The last time there was any change to the regulations for school nurses was 1982. That is over 30 years ago. The student population is without a doubt more complex today than 30 years ago with a myriad of physical and emotional health needs. The school nurse must manage these health needs on a daily basis through assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation.

School nurses are an intricate part of the educational process and we should not be over looked. I end with a quoted from a great woman “You can’t educate a child that isn’t healthy and you can’t keep a child healthy who isn’t educated” Joycelyn Elders

Please vote yes to SB 1070. If not now then when?

Respectfully submitted,

Verna Bernard-Jones, RN